

THE LOST COMMITTEE

-- for my former colleagues

expeditions of deans seeking it have disappeared
teachers whisper of a conference room overgrown
with lianas and rumor has the records buried
near the source of the library's blue tile floor

the Committee was to deal with the abominable
snowman the griffin and unicorn it has not
been seen for years its final proposal lies
on the table of a meeting no one can recall

still we find cryptic minutes carved on desks
beneath hearts that read 'Sue Puts Out' and hear
the hum of deliberations in florescent lights

a school day will run as smooth as a mimeograph
until lectures stall and radiators begin to beat
like tom toms calling the Committee to order

-- Michael McMahon

New London NH

From The Fifties

Child even the buds
 at the ends
of your arms will not grow.
I shall touch
 the sawed off logs.
An expert draws complex maps
of your genes, big loops
for your features; but all
that spacing
 is uneven.

Yesterday the poem
in my typewriter sounding
like Blue Suede Shoes.
 The small cassette
in my chest sang Hound Dog.

There is discord in the cells,
though some are splitting
with the evenness of 8's;
 "rhythms work to correct
 if the timing is off,"
he says. On a blackboard he chalks
the combination for your face.

This morning your vital signs
and mine measured
on the expert's table;
legs anchored into stirrups,
my torso a clumsy vessel
he has wired for sound.

I drop a depth charge into your space
and do not hear the old songs
in the sound of your pulse
as it plumbs me
for a rhythm, for something
unalterable.

Magnifying The Light
Through A Glass In Winter

Here in this place to which
the light comes traveling
a long way through the threads,
the houses are black knots.
It is the shape of the planet
weaving itself into a blanket.

Inside the circle of light
you have been aiming, the addresses
multiply and come closer.
You inherit your neighbor's suit,
a bright cloth against despair;
like burnt string
it holds its shape
until you try to wear it.

Your message to him
a kiss
dammed up against the glass.
A reservoir
the fish have abandoned
is collecting old shells,
like a history of carbon, long after
the bodies have gone
into their new jewels.

On shore, the rats are taking
their instruments
to your garden.

No hope now of sleep
beneath the warm blanket,
ignoring the winter light
like a bear.